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16 November 1971

Carol - History File
Please
[Signature]

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Office of Personnel History, Missing in
Action (HS Project 5.063)

25X1A 1. The subject paper has been included as part of
25X1A the Office of Personnel's historical program since Septem-
25X1A ber 1969 when the undersigned became the Support Services
25X1A Historical Officer (SSHO). [REDACTED] was sched-
uled to write the paper, but on 20 September 1971, I had a
session with [REDACTED] who had just inherited the job of
writing the MIA history. [REDACTED] had been working on person-
nel problems in DDS&T/OSA; and because he has no background in
research and no familiarity with the Agency's missing in action
activities, [REDACTED] felt ill-equipped for the assigned task.

25X1A 2. At various times in past months, I have raised
25X1A questions about the status of the subject history with [REDACTED] 25X1A
[REDACTED] OP historical officer. In fact, on 9 November 1971
I had a telephone conversation with him and on 11 November I
spoke to him personally regarding the possibility of having OP
25X1A assign [REDACTED] to do the research for the MIA report.
25X1A [REDACTED] had done an excellent job of research on the OP his-
tory of retirement policy, and she had recently indicated to a
member of the Historical Staff that she would enjoy a similar
assignment on the Missing in Action study.

25X1A 3. [REDACTED] informed me that [REDACTED] would not
25X1A be available for the research, but he did say that OP had appoint-
ed another individual to begin research work on 15 November 1971.
The name of this individual was not available, nor were his
25X1A qualifications, at the time that I talked to [REDACTED] 25X1A

25X1A 4. As I noted to [REDACTED] on 26 May 1971 when we 25X1A
discussed the history--and as I have pointed out to [REDACTED]--
it is unfortunate that this paper has not been given higher prior-
ity in the OP scheme of things--the potential political importance
of the report with respect to the Agency " image " cannot be
overstressed.

25X1A [REDACTED]

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25X1A 8. I had occasion today to bring this subject to Mr. [REDACTED] attention, should the DDS wish to exert some pressure on OP to give priority to the paper. As it now stands, my estimate is that it is unlikely that the history will be ready for publication before the end of May 1972.

25X1A 9. I do not believe that there is anything else that I can do at this time to stimulate action on the subject history, but the record should reflect this Staff's concern that the history be available if and when [REDACTED] are released.

25X1A [REDACTED]

Dist:

- 0 - ChHS
- 1 - DChHS
- 1 - [REDACTED]
- 1 - [REDACTED]
- 1 - JBP
- 1 - HS chrono

Support Services Historical
Officer (SSHO)

25X1A

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CPYRGHT

HONG KONG, Nov. 15 — The mother of an American held captive in China for 19 years said today he believes chances are good that he will be released and not have to serve out his life sentence.

Mrs. Mary V. Downey, of New Britain, Conn., who is 70 years old, reported this after a two-week visit to China. During her stay Mrs. Downey met eight times with her son, John Thomas Downey, who is imprisoned in Peking.

Mr. Downey, a civilian employee of the United States Army, was aboard a plane that took off from South Korea in 1952, during the Korean war, and disappeared.

The Defense Department said the plane had been on a flight to Japan but Peking accused Mr. Downey of espionage and having been connected to a spy network in China, and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Diplomatic sources said that on the basis of Mrs. Downey's report it now seemed likely that Mr. Downey, 41, and Richard G. Fecteau, 44, who had been on the plane with Mr. Downey, would soon be released. Mr. Fecteau, who is from Lynn, Mass. and was also a civilian employee of the Army, was given a 20-year sentence and would be due for release next year.

The sources said that release of the Americans was the type of goodwill gesture that might be expected from China to set

the stage for the President's visit to Peking after the first of the year.

The sources said they hoped that China might also release two other imprisoned American Air Force pilots, Capt. Philip E. Smith, 37, and Lieut. Robert J. Flynn, 33, forced down after having strayed over China during missions in North Vietnam.

Mrs. Downey, accompanied to China by a son, William Downey, a New York lawyer, and his wife, said they had been permitted to visit once with Mr. Fecteau and that they had found him "in excellent health and fine spirits." She said she had also found Mr. Downey in that condition.

Mrs. Downey stated, "At the end of our visit, Jack told us that he had been informed by the prison authorities that his case was being reviewed to determine whether, under their policy of leniency, he might be released rather than serve out his life sentence."

She continued: "The prison officials told Jack that an important factor in deciding whether to apply leniency was the prisoner's behavior while in prison, and that they considered that his behavior had been good."

"We have no assurance that Jack will be released, nor, if so, when. But Jack said that he did not think that the prison officials would tell him about this possibility, and have him in turn tell it to us, unless the chances were good."